J. I. 175

Strange and Terrible

# NEWS

FROM

# OAKINGHAM

In the County of *Berks*.

BEING

A full and true Relation of a great and terrible

# Thunder-clap

That happened on the 23 day of *July* 1675. between 11 and 12 aclock in the forenoon.

By which was killed one *Chr. Batchelor* as he was sitting in a Chair by the fire-side, in *Oakingham* aforesaid.

With several other strange things it did in the said house, which in this Book are related.

The truth whereof is well known, and attested by several chief men of the said Town.

*With Permission.*

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# STRANGE and TERRIBLE NEWS FROM OAKINGHAM IN THE County of BERKS.

THE truth of this ſtory being ſo faithfully atteſted under the hands of the moſt principal perſons of the Town, where the Tragedy fell out, and for the ſtrangeneſs of it, thought fit to be communicated to ſome perſons in this City, to the end it might be tranſmitted to a more publick notice; We ſhall give you in the following lines, a juſt and faithful account of the

particulars, which we wish may have that Influence upon all that read or hear it, as to work in them that holy fear and reverence towards Almighty God, as such astonishing Acts and Demonstrations of his Divine Power may justly exact of them.

At the Town of *Okingham* in *Bark shire*, (a place well known, being one of the principal Market-towns of that County) there dwelleth one *Robert Hunt* a Maulster, that in that way of trading had dealing with several persons of the Country thereabout that used to come to his house to buy Mault of him: Among the rest, one *Christopher Batchelor* living at a place called *Sandhurst* in the said County about three miles off from *Okingham*, happened upon the three and twentieth day of *July* last, to come to the house of the said *Robert Hunt* with intentions to buy a parcel of Mault of him for his necessary use. He came thither in the morning, which proved something wet and rainy. The aforesaid *Robert Hunt*, his Wife and two Children, were at home together with one *Davyes* a Neighbour of the said Town: the men were sitting discoursing together in the Kitchin, and the said *Christopher Batchelor* sitting by the fire side there. About eleven or twelve of the clock, being Dinner-time, the woman of the house was about taking up some Beans and Bacon that were then provided for their

their Dinner; when just about the said time, it having rained very hard a little time before, on a sudden the Skies were mask'd with blackness as a presage of an approaching Tragedy; and thereupon a great flash of Lightning insued, together with a dreadful clap of Thunder, which made the people quake at the hearing of it. This pursevant of the Divine power, it seems, came not without its errand; it had a frightful Message to deliver, which it speedily put in Execution; for this flash of Lightning (as a prodrome to a farther Judgment) had first rent, with a great breach, the Chimny of the room where they sate, took two bricks out of the hearth of the said Chimny, and thence proceeding into the Room, ratled dawn the Pewter from the shelves, and threw down a quart of beer that stood there by them.

After this, it made its passage through the two windows in the Toom, both which it shattered to pieces. These fearful accidents caused a great agony and consternation in the persons that beheld it, especially in the aforesaid *Robert Hunt* the Master of the house, who at the horrour of this strange Spectacle, concluded with himself that they were all dead persons; but God was better to him (as it proved) than his fears did prognosticate: For looking about him in this amazement to see if any were hurt or dama-

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ged by the aforesaid Lightning, saw all his own Family standing upon their legs and well, without any other damage than what the fright had put them to, for which, the poor man was very joyful; but looking towards the Chimny in the very instant, he sees the aforesaid *Batchelor* just falling to the ground out of the Chair where he sate, with these words in his mouth, (*O Christ, what is come to me?*) which were the last words that ever he was heard to speak, being strucken with death, as they found when they came to him: not all the means they could use (of which there was none wanting) being able to recover him to life again; but there he remained a liveless coarse, and a sad spectacle of the Divine Judgement, to the terrour of all about him. Company coming in immediately upon the outcry of this Tragedy, the body was viewed, but no visible hurt appeared in any part of it, only a strong smell of powder about his clothes. The woman of the house indeed was taken very ill, and continued so all day, which might possible be through her affrightment at the aforesaid Spectacle; but it pleased God no more hurt was done at that time to the house or any person in it, saving what is before related.

There have been at least two hundred persons at the aforesaid house to satisfie their curiosity in truth of these particulars; and among the rest, the

the persons whose hands were set to the account that was first given out of it, which were, *Robert Salisbury* the Minister of the place, *Abel Bradley*, *Simon Leash*, *Edward Monke*, and *John Bradly*, Magistrates of the said Town of *Okingham*.

It is not in our commission to acquaint you with the Quality or Conditions of the partie upon whom this heavy Judgment was inflicted; neither have we heard of any gross Enormities in his life, that might stigmatize him as a mark for the Divine Vengeance; nor (upon this instance) can we charitably conclude any such things by him. 'Tis the impious folly of men, to pass uncharitable constructions upon such subjects of misery, as if a more remarkable punishment would argue them to be the more notorious sinners; when in the mean while, it may be notwithstanding such corporal Inflictions, their Souls may be in a happier state than theirs that censure them. Gods Judgments are a great deep, not (without great presumption) to be fathomed by the narrow line of our Conceptions: But to check the immodest, and too arrogant censures of men in such cases, our Blessed Saviour hath taught us in the instance of the slaughter'd *Galileans*, That except we do for our selves repent us of our sins, we can expect, and do deserve, no more mercie at his hands than other the Monuments of his exemplary Justice. If it please God sometimes to step out of the usual rode of his Providence, to inflict some

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ſtrange and unuſual puniſhment upon any, it is not thereby intended that we ſhould triumph in their miſeries, or cenſure their perſons, but rather humbly to adore them in thoſe diſcoveries of his Divine Power and Juſtice; and to magnifie his patience and long-ſuffering towards us, when there wanted neither Power on his part, nor Provocation on ours, to procure the like puniſhment to our ſelves.

FINIS.